

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3, 5, and 7-17 are pending in this case. Claims 1, 2, and 16 are amended by the present amendment to correct informalities and incorporate the subject matter of Claim 6, and Claim 6 is canceled. Thus, no new matter is added.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1 and 5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Kawano, et al. (U.S. Pub. No. 2002/0123011, herein “Kawano”); Claims 2 and 3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Kawano in view Shirakawa, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,222,161, herein “Shirakawa”) and Matsuyama (U.S. Patent No. 6,246,030); Claims 7-12 and 15-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Kawano in view of Shirakawa and Matsuyama, further in view of Shirakawa (JP 11-204417, herein “Shirakawa-JP”) and Akimoto (U.S. Patent No. 6,097,005); Claims 13 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Kawano in view of Shirakawa and Matsuyama, further in view of Shirakawa-JP and Akimoto and Boshita (JP 2002-359175); and Claim 6 was indicated as including allowable subject matter.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication of allowable subject matter in Claim 6.

Independent Claims 1 and 16 are amended to incorporate the subject matter of Claim 6, which was indicated as allowable.

In light of the amendments, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) of Claim 1 and Claim 5, which depends therefrom, and the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) of Claim 16 and Claim 17, which depends therefrom, be withdrawn.

Claims 2, 3, and 7-15 depend from Claim 1. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) of Claims 2, 3, and 7-15 be withdrawn.

Accordingly, the outstanding rejections are traversed and the pending claims are believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is, therefore, respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



Steven P. Wehrouch
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 32,829

Usha Munukutla-Parker
Registration No. 61,939

Customer Number
22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220
(OSMMN 08/07)
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